# ASTRO CITY 18

# "UNTITLED AS YET"

Written by

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**ONE - 1 PANEL**

[1] CLOSE-UP, FULL-FACE AND MAYBE DOWN TO THE TOP OF THE SHOULDERS, ON THE **BLACK RAPIER**, SMILING PROUDLY BUT A LITTLE SOMBERLY, HOLDING UP A GLASS OF RED WINE IN A TOAST. HE'S LOOKING DIRECTLY AT US. HE HAS HIS MASK OFF. HE'S A BLACK MAN, WITH CLOSE-CROPPED WHITE HAIR AND A WHITE WEDGE OF A GOATEE. HIS FACE IS LINED WITH AGE AND EXPERIENCE; HE'S IN HIS EARLY SEVENTIES. BUT HE'S VERY FIT; HE'S BEEN KEPT IN GOOD FIGHTING SHAPE BY SOME SORT OF SERUM, OVER THE YEARS.

STILL, HE LOOKS HIS AGE.

TITLE
EVENSONG (maybe)

BLACK RAPIER
...and to close, I want to thank you all for coming. It's been wonderful, all these years, to know you, to work with you, to fight alongside you.

BLACK RAPIER
But alas...

**TWO - 4 PANELS**

[1] LARGE PANEL, CLOSE TO HALF THE PAGE. WE'RE IN THE MAIN BALLROOM OF **BUTLER'S**, WHICH HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR YEARS, BUT HAS BEEN REOPENED AND GUSSIED UP FOR THIS EVENT. PEOPLE, WELL-DRESSED, AT BALLROOM TABLES, APPLAUDING OR HOLDING UP THEIR GLASSES AS WELL. THEY'RE THE SAME KIND OF **CROWD** AS THE LAST TIME WE SAW THIS PLACE, BUT MAYBE SKEWING OLDER -- THEY HAVEN'T BEEN BRINGING IN NEW MEMBERS RECENTLY. SO OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF PAGES, WE CAN SEE **ZACHARY JOHNSON, TAMRA** AND **ROSCOE**, BUT THEY'RE ALL OLDER, SINCE IT'S BEEN YEARS. WE SEE **BRIAN KINNEY, SAMARITAN**, **WINGED VICTORY** (BOTH IN COSTUME), AND OTHERS. AMONG THEM, OUR LEADS FOR THE ISSUE, **QUARREL** (IN EVENING DRESS) AND **CRACKERJACK**, IN A TUX BUT WEARING A FAKE BEARD.

UP AT THE DAIS, ADDRESSING THE ROOM, IS THE **BLACK RAPIER**. THIS IS HIS RETIREMENT PARTY. HIS MASK IS AT THE TABLE WHERE HE WAS SITTING.

AND THERE ARE **WAITERS** AND **WAITRESSES** CIRCULATING, BUT THEY'RE ALL ADULTS. THE CLUB HASN'T BEEN RECRUITING TEENS WHILE IT'S BEEN CLOSED, SO THESE FOLKS, WHO CAME OUT OF "RETIREMENT" TO BE HERE, ARE IN THEIR TWENTIES OR OLDER.

BLACK RAPIER
...much as I'd like to go another 45 years, even the serum that kept me healthy and limber all this time has its limits.

BLACK RAPIER
It lasted far longer than I'd ever have dreamed...

BLACK RAPIER
...but it's time to hang up the scabbard. Thank you so much.

CAPTION
It was the Black Rapier's retirement party.

CAPTION
They'd reopened Butler's for the occasion, but it didn't feel right. Everything was dusted and polished, it looked the same as ever...

FX
CLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPC
LAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAP

CAPTION
...but somehow it didn't smell right. Like it had been closed up too long, and airing it out only went so far. It felt...

[2] **PEOPLE** ARE GETTING UP FROM THEIR CHAIRS, HOLDING THEIR DRINKS, TALKING, MINGLING. **CRACKERJACK** AND **QUARREL** CHAT AS THEY DO SO TOO.

CONTINUED:

THEY'RE BOTH IN FANTASTIC SHAPE, BUT THEY'RE ALSO BOTH ABOUT 50 YEARS OLD, AND WE SHOULD SEE THAT WHEN WE'RE CLOSE ENOUGH TO THEM.

CRACKERJACK
...ask me, this place always smelled a little off, like a mausoleum for self-satisfied crimefighters...

QUARREL
And I'm sure that has nothing to do with them never asking you to join, hm? You always had to come as my date...

[3] FROM QUARREL'S POV, CLOSE ON **CRACKERJACK** AS HE LOOKS OVER HIS SHOULDER AND SMILES AT HER, A TRIUMPHANT, MISCHIEVOUS SMILE.

CRACKERJACK
Not tonight, baby! Personal invitation and everything!

[4] **CRACKERJACK** HAS SHOULDERED HIS WAY THROUGH A GROUP OF **PEOPLE** CLUSTERED AROUND THE **BLACK RAPIER** (WHO IS NOW ON THE MAIN FLOOR), WHO'S BEEN SHAKING HANDS AND GREETING PEOPLE.

CRACKERJACK
And hey, here's the man of the hour!

CRACKERJACK
Tell me the truth, B.R. -- you're really retiring just to shut up the ever-growing throng begging you to get a more stylish costume, right?

**THREE - 5 PANELS**

ALL FULL TIERS, I THINK.

[1] THE **BLACK RAPIER** AND **CRACKERJACK** SHAKE HANDS; THE BLACK RAPIER'S CHUCKLING, SHAKING HIS HEAD RUEFULLY. CRACKERJACK HOLDS A HAND UP TO HIS EAR AS IF HE'S DEAF. MORE **PARTY** GOING ON IN THE BACKGROUND.

BLACK RAPIER
In character to the end, Crackerjack?

BLACK RAPIER
But this is rich -- a costume critique from the man who got his outfit by raiding Evel Knievel's wardrobe...

CRACKERJACK
Eh? Who? Must be from before my time, old man...

[2] PULL BACK ON THE SCENE. **THEY'RE** STILL LAUGHING, OTHERS JOINING IN THE CONVERSATION. FROM THE FOREGROUND, **QUARREL** LOOKS ON, THOUGHTFUL, SOMBER.

BLACK RAPIER
(sl)
Nice beard, too!

CRACKERJACK
(sl)
Hey, secret identity. Like I trust this crowd...

CAPTION
He'd fought crime since 1970. Local hero of New Orleans all those years. Leader of Honor Guard for most of it...

[3] AND PULL BACK FURTHER STILL. MORE PARTY. **QUARREL** IS TURNING AWAY, A LITTLE. THERE'S A **WAITER** NEARBY, WHO SPEAKS TO HER.

CAPTION
It really is the end of an era.

WAITER
Ma'am?

[4] CLOSER ON THEM. HE HOLDS UP HIS TRAY OF CHAMPAGNE-FILLED GLASSES.

WAITER
Another drink?

CONTINUED:

QUARREL
Thanks, but no.

[5] SHE EASES UP BEHIND **CRACKERJACK**, WHO BY THIS TIME IS TELLING LIES TO **ROSCOE**, WITH LOTS OF GESTICULATION. ROSCOE'S LAUGHING, AND **ZACK** AND **TAMRA** ARE TELLING HIM NOT TO BELIEVE A WORD.

QUARREL
Hey.

QUARREL
Let's get out of here, okay?

CRACKERJACK
But I was just telling -- all right.

CAPTION
And I can't --

**FOUR - 4 PANELS**

[1] FULL TIER PANEL. **SILHOUETTES** OR **NEAR-SILHOUETTES** AS, IN A DARKENED PRIVATE ROOM, THEY CHANGE CLOTHING.

CAPTION
I can't be there any more. I love everyone in there, but the weight of it all, the years of it all --

[2] BIG PANEL. AGAIN, CLOSE TO HALF THE PAGE. **QUARREL** AND **CRACKERJACK** SWING THROUGH THE NIGHT SKY OVER ASTRO CITY. ACROBATICALLY, IN SOME SORT OF DYNAMIC OPPOSITION TO EACH OTHER, SO ON OF THEM'S JUST AT THE END OF AN UPWARD ARC AND THE OTHER ONE'S JUST STARTING A DOWNWARD ARC.

SHE'S IN THAT ARMORED COSTUME FROM #3, MAYBE A LITTLE MORE BEEFED UP BY NOW. HE'S IN THE SAME OLD COSTUME, BUT THERE ARE ADDED KNEE- AND ELBOW-PADS, STITCHED INTO THE OUTFIT AS INOBTRUSIVELY AS POSSIBLE.

CRACKERJACK
...everything gone, everything's changing. This city -- it's just not the same place any more.

CRACKERJACK
Those Jesus freaks -- the Crossbreed -- whatever happened to them, anyway?

QUARREL
After Noah passed, they moved on. Daniel started a church in Minnesota, Mary and Joshua married and set up a school...

QUARREL
But you always hated them! You complained non-stop!

[3] **CRACKERJACK** CHUCKLES, THINKING BACK.

CRACKERJACK
A street preacher with sonic powers? All the constant "have you heard the word?" You bet I complained.

CRACKERJACK
But they kept things lively. They had something. Not like these new kids...

[4] THEY SWING ON, AND WE SEE THEM GOING, FROM BEHIND. SHE PUTS A HAND UP TO HER EAR. GETTING AN ELECTRONIC ALERT.

CRACKERJACK
I mean, Reflex 6? What does that even mean? These new First Family kids growing up...

CONTINUED:

CRACKERJACK
...and the J-Hawks, they used to be nobody, and now they’re doing big stuff? They’re not even based here!

QUARREL
Whoa, wait a sec. Biometric alarm...

FX
(very small)
pip pip bip...

**FIVE - 4 PANELS**

[1] FULL TIER. ESTABLISHING SHOT OF EITHER THE **ASTRO CITY RAILYARD** OR A WATERFRONT AREA NEAR THE DOCKS. LOTS OF TEXTURE, LOTS OF SHADOWS.

CAPTION
We'd set up alarms down by the railyard, looking for some very specific people, either heartbeats or energy signatures.

CAPTION
They'd been spotted here often enough, but if they'd stashed something, it was too well shielded to find.

[2] CLOSER IN. A GROUP OF **SILHOUETTED FIGURES** IS CROUCHED AROUND AN OPENING IN THE GROUND (OR WHATEVER).

CAPTION
But...

VOICE
Here! Here it is, just like he --

[3] ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE BIG ESTABLISHING PANELS. THIS TIME, WE'RE SEEING THE NEW (OR AT LEAST, NEW TO READERS) **CHESSMEN**. THEY'RE CLUSTERED AROUND THAT HOLE IN THE GROUND (OR POSSIBLY IN THE SHORE BETWEEN DOCKS), AND INSIDE THE HOLE IT LOOKS LIKE AN ELECTRONIC SAFE, WITH LOTS OF READOUTS AND GLOWY BITS TO INDICATE SENSOR-SHIELDING.

AND NOW BRILLIANT LIGHTS HAVE GONE ON AROUND THEM, AND THEY'RE STARTLED, LOOKING AROUND. **CRACKERJACK** AND **QUARREL** ARE SWINGING IN TOWARD THEM IN THE BACKGROUND.

I'LL DESCRIBE THE NEW CHESSMEN AT THE END OF THE PAGE.

KING
Wh-wha -- ?

CRACKERJACK
Hey! Hey, Rinaldo!

CAPTION
The Chessmen.

CAPTION
They'd been running in this new incarnation about five years, and we'd clashed with them a few times. Put them away once or twice.

CAPTION
But last time, they'd hit a whole series of wealthy collectors, infiltrated their security with an online chess application --

CONTINUED:

CAPTION
-- and they'd walked away with over ten million in cash and valuables.

[4] CLOSE ON THE **KING**, THE OTHER **CHESSMEN** ARRAYED AROUND HIM, THE KING'S ANGRY, THE REST ARE TENSE, READY FOR A FIGHT.

CAPTION
They'd been laying low. But apparently they got tired of it --

KING
Quarrel! Crackerjack!

KING
Kill them!

OKAY, THE NEW **CHESSMEN** AREN'T ALL ARMORED UNDERLINGS ANY MORE -- THEY'RE COSTUMED HI-TECH CRIMINALS, WEARING SLEEK, SEMI-ABSTRACT OUTFITS THAT COMBINE THE LOOK OF THE CHESSPIECE AND THE LOOK OF THE CHARACTER IT REPRESENTS -- LIKE A STRIPPED-DOWN, SF-IZED VERSION OF THESE MEDIEVAL LOOKS. THEY ALL HAVE THE CHESSPIECE SYMBOLS AS BADGES ON THEIR LEFT BREAST, AND THE SLEEK UNDERSUIT UNDER THE VARIOUS TRAPPINGS IS BLACK. MAYBE THEY HAVE HI-TECH METAL BOOTS, GAUNTLETS, BELTS AND SHOULDER-CAPS ALL IN A SIMILAR STYLE, TO MAKE THEM CLEARLY A TEAM. THEY ALSO ALL WEAR MASKS THAT COVER THEIR FACES -- IMAGINE IS GREEN LANTERN'S MASK CAME DOWN TO BELOW HIS LOWER LIP.

ANYWAY:

**KING** - GOT A CROWN AND AN ABSTRACTED ERMINE-TRIMMED ROBE, A POWER SCEPTRE AND A FLOATING THRONE/CHAIR -- HE'S NOT IN THE CHAIR WHEN WE FIRST SEE HIM, BUT IT'S PARKED NEARBY.

**QUEEN** - A MORE COMPACT CROWN, A BIGGER SCEPTER, GAUZIER ROBES AND SOMETHING SULTRY TO THE OUTFIT -- A DIAMOND-SHAPED BOOB WINDOW? TRANSLUCENT LEGGINGS RATHER THAN BLACK. SLIMMER, ELEGANT BOOTS AND GAUNTLETS. SHE HAS A SMALLER SKY-THRONE.

**BISHOP** - GOTTA HAVE AT LEAST SOME KIND OF POINTY HAT, THOUGH IT'D BE NICE AND SUPERHERO-Y IF IT FRAMED HIS FACE AND HAD POINTS BOTH ABOVE AND BELOW. HE CAN FLY LIKE AN ARROW, AND FIRE POWER BLASTS.

**KNIGHT** - ANOTHER WOMAN, BUT THIS ONE TOUGH, BRAWNY, RATHER THAN SULTRY. SHE RIDES A ROBO-STEED - NOT A FULL-SIZED HORSE, BUT IT'S GOT A KNIGHT-LIKE HORSES HEAD, AND IT HOVERS. SHE CAN TELEPORT, AND HAS AN ENERGY SWORD.

**ROOK** - HE'S ALL ARMOR. POWERFUL CRACKLING ENERGY AROUND HIS FISTS, WHEN FIGHTING.

(CONTINUED)

THE KING IS LATINO. MAYBE THE QUEEN IS BLACK, THE BISHOP ITALIAN, THE KNIGHT ASIAN AND THE ROOK SWEDISH?

**SIX - 5 PANELS**

[1] **CRACKERJACK** DOES A SPINNING VAULT OVER SOMETHING, KNOCKING **ROOK** AND **BISHOP** OVER WITH A BOOT TO THE BACK FOR EACH. HE'S CHEERFUL, CHATTING WITH KING.

CRACKERJACK
Man, Rinaldo, I thought you were smarter than this.

CRACKERJACK
Didn't we talk? Didn't I say you had a chance, you could get out?

[2] THE **KING** SWINGS AT CRACKERJACK WITH THE CRACKLING SCEPTRE, BUT **CRACKERJACK** DODGES. IN THE BACKGROUND, **QUARREL** IS FIRING SMOKESCREEN-CHARGES AT **QUEEN** AND THE RECOVERING **BISHOP**, TEMPORARILY BLINDING THEM.

KING
Rinaldo? Rinaldo's gone, man!

KING
He wanted to leave the loot in the ground, man, just let it rot there. I made him talk, give up the ionic keys. But, eh, I hadda ask rough.

KING
Long live the king, hey?

[3] SMALL PANEL, CLOSE ON **CRACKERJACK**. HE'S GENUINELY STARTLED, AND SADDENED AT THE NEWS THAT RINALDO'S DEAD -- THEY WERE FOES, BUT THERE WASN'T ANY HATRED THERE.

CRACKERJACK
You -- killed him? Man, that's --

CAPTION
He's distracted, just for a second.

[4] SMALL PANEL, CLOSE ON **QUARREL'S FACE**, IN A BLUR OF MOTION, TRYING TO DO SOMETHING SHE'S GOT NO TIME FOR.

CAPTION
And I see it coming, but --

QUARREL
Crackerjack! Move your --

[5] THE **KNIGHT** HAS TELEPORTED INTO THE AIR BEHIND CRACKERJACK, AND IS SLASHING THROUGH HIM WITH THE SWORD (IT'S AN ENERGY-SWORD, IT DISRUPTS HIM CELLULARLY, BUT NO PHYSICAL WOUND). **CRACKERJACK'S** ARCHING HIS BACK IN AGONY.

CONTINUED:

IN THE BACKGROUND, **QUARREL'S** BLASTING **ROOK'S FEET** OUT FROM UNDER HIM, BUT HER HEAD'S TURNED TO TAKE IN WHAT'S HAPPENING TO CRACKERJACK.

CRACKERJACK
AAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!

CAPTION
Two years ago, he'd have dodged it.

CAPTION
If I wasn't wearing all this extra armor, I could have gotten to her in time. But --

QUARREL
NO!

**SEVEN - 5 PANELS**

[1] THE **KING**, EXULTANT, IS GETTING A GOOD BIG CRACKLE AROUND HIS POWER SCEPTRE, ABOUT TO BRING IT DOWN AND KILL THE WRITHING, PAINED **CRACKERJACK** WITH IT.

KING
Hah! You can catch up with Rinaldo real soon, you piece of --

CRACKERJACK
(ragged)
Nnnnnahhhhh...

[2] THE **KING** IS SUDDENLY BLASTED BACK BY EXPLOSIVE CHARGES HITTING HIS CHEST (THE SUIT MUST BE PROTECTIVE EVEN IF IT'S SKINTIGHT).

FX
POOM POOM POOM

[3] WE SEE THAT IT WAS **QUARREL** WHO FIRED THE BLASTS, HER LAUNCHER STILL CRACKLING WITH SMOKE, HER ARM STILL POINTING, STEADIED BY THE OTHER. SHE'S GOT A DANGEROUS LOOK IN HER EYE.

QUARREL
You shouldn't have done that, King baby.

QUARREL
You Chessmen, you weren't killers. Not before.

[4] **BISHOP** COMES ZOOMING AT HER FROM BEHIND, BUT SHE TUMBLES FORWARD IN A LOW SOMERSAULT, DODGING HIM....

QUARREL
But since that's how you want to play now --

[5] AND AS HE PASSES OVERHEAD, SHE COMES UP WITH BOTH FEET, ROCKETING HIM RIGHT INTO THE **QUEEN**. WHO GOES FLAILING BACKWARD, LOSING HER GRIP ON HER POWER SCEPTRE.

QUEEN
Ghah!

FX
BKAMM

**EIGHT - 5 PANELS**

[1] **QUARREL** DOES A BIG SPIRALING STARFISH OF A SPINNING LEAP IN MID-AIR, SNAGGING THE QUEEN'S SCEPTRE OUT OF THE AIR...

QUARREL
-- that's how we'll play it!

[2] LARGISH PANEL. A BIG **BURST OF ENERGY** GOES OFF, SENDING EVERYTHING INTO INTENSE HIGH-CONTRAST BLACK AND WHITE. EVERYBODY'S SHOVED BACK BY THE FORCE...

CAPTION
The techs who designed the suits wanted the Queen to have a trick -- a blast that made her as powerful as the chess piece she's modeled after.

CAPTION
It was only to be used if the others were already down, and I didn't think Sarah Land -- the current Queen -- even knew about it.

CAPTION
But I did.

[3] THE **CHESSMEN** ARE ALL DOWN, GROGGY, THE CIRCUITS IN THEIR SUITS DISRUPTED. **QUARREL**, BREATHING HARD, STANDS HUNCHED IN THE CENTER OF THE PANEL, LIKE SHE'S ABOUT READY TO DROP. **CRACKERJACK** IS STRUGGLING, STARTING TO GET UP...

CRACKERJACK
(ragged)
N-nice one, babe!

CRACKERJACK
(ragged)
Man...Rinaldo really was the only smart one.

[4] **CRACKERJACK** SITS ON HIS HAUNCHES IN FRONT OF **ROOK**, WHO'S HALF-PROPPED UP BY SOME RUBBLE OR SOMETHING.

CRACKERJACK
He musta told you guys we were watching. But you didn't believe him?

CRACKERJACK
So let's talk. What can you tell me that's worth me getting you out of that shell before you suffocate, Dirk?

ROOK
(ragged)
P-please...

CONTINUED:

[5] **COPS** ARE NOW TAKING THE **CHESSMEN** IN, POLICE CARS WITH FLASHING LIGHTS IN THE BACKGROUND. AND **CRACKERJACK** AND **QUARREL**, STIFF AND SORE, ARE SWINGING AWAY.

CRACKERJACK
Cocaine? They were going to use the stash to set themselves up as coke smugglers?

CRACKERJACK
That doesn't even have anything to do with chess!

**NINE - 5 PANELS**

[1] EXTERIOR SHOT, ONE OF THE TALLER, MORE MODERN APARTMENT BUILDINGS IN CITY CENTER. WE'RE LOOKING AT THE TOP FLOORS.

FROM BLDG
"What?" he says to me. "What?"

[2] INSIDE QUARREL'S APARTMENT. THIS IS A NICE PLACE. BIG AIRY ROOMS, HIGH CEILINGS, FLOOR TO CEILING WINDOWS, LOW, SCANDINAVIAN FURNITURE. THERE ARE **PIECES OF UNIFORM** SCATTERED ON THE FLOOR, TRAILING ALONG THROUGH AN ARCHWAY. IT'S THE USUAL MOVIE VISUAL CUE THAT THEY'RE OFF HAVING SEX...

FROM OFF
Like he doesn't even remember what he's dressed up as.

FROM OFF
No sense of theater, of history. Coke smugglers!

[3] ...BUT THEY'RE NOT. WE'VE MADE OUR WAY, HERE, INTO THE BATHROOM, AND IT'S BIG, OPEN AND AIRY, LIKE THE REST OF THE APARTMENT. ON ONE SIDE IS A SUNKEN WHIRLPOOL TUBS, ROOMY ENOUGH FOR TWO. **CRACKERJACK**, NAKED, IS LOWERING HIMSELF STIFFLY INTO THE HOT WATER, SIGHING WITH RELIEF AND PAIN TOGETHER. **QUARREL'S** DOWN TO LEGGINGS AND A SPORTS BRA OR SOMETHING, AND IS STARTING TO PEEL OFF THE SPORTS BRA.

CRACKERJACK
Ahhhhhhhh...

CRACKERJACK
You know, babe, plenty of room in here for you, too...

CAPTION
There was a time that's how our evenings would end. Wild, shake-the-walls sex. Sweaty and exciting and oh so good.

CAPTION
But nowadays, more and more...

[4] CLOSE ON HER, GOING TO THE CLOSET, TAKING OUT A GAUZY, SEMI-SHEER ROBE. TALKING TO HIM OVER HER SHOULDER.

QUARREL
You're kidding, right? You're too tired to move as it is, and I'm too tired to do all the work.

QUARREL
You took a real hit there. That neuro-sword --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

[5] HE RELAXES IN THE TUB. SHE'S PUTTING ON THE ROBE IN THE BACKGROUND.

CRACKERJACK
You know, if you didn't have that stupid heavy armor slowing you down, you'd have taken --

QUARREL
Oh, you are kidding.

**TEN - 5 PANELS**

[1] SHE LOOKS AT HIM, ARMS CROSSED.

QUARREL
If I didn't have that stupid bulky suit, I'd be so beat up by now I'd be in a wheelchair, and you know it.

QUARREL
We're fifty, Jack. I've lost a step. So have you. Admit it.

[2] CLOSE ON HIM, TWIRLING A FINGER IN THE AIR, MAKING A ROGUISH SMILE AT HER.

CRACKERJACK
I admit nothing!

[3] SHE CROSSES TO THE MEDICINE CABINET (OR IN THEIR CASE, IT'S PRACTICALLY A MEDICINE CLOSET, VERY LARGE, SLEEK AND MODERN BUT FULL OF INTERESTING, EXOTIC CONTAINERS).

QUARREL
Sure. Tell me that in the morning, when you're hobbling around like you're ninety.

QUARREL
What do you want? The Kelueki liniment? Or some of the K'ntari stuff Starwoman gave us? There's still some left...

[4] ON HIM AND HER HAND, AS SHE HANDS HIM WHAT LOOKS LIKE A COLD-CREAM BOTTLE CARVED OUT OF A RUBY.

CRACKERJACK
That stuff smells like the back end of -- I don't know, something very alien and very stinky.

CRACKERJACK
What I really need is Black Rapier's serum. If it kept him going...

[5] CLOSE ON HER, TOSSING THREE TYLENOL INTO HER MOUTH.

QUARREL
Won't work.

QUARREL
Was a miracle it worked for him, from what I hear.

**ELEVEN - 5 PANELS**

ALL FULL TIERS.

[1] OUT IN THE KITCHEN AREA, SHE POURS HERSELF A GLASS OF WHITE WINE. CLOSE ON HER HANDS AND THE GLASS.

QUARREL
(softly)
Sweaty and exciting...

QUARREL
You okay in there, Jack?

[2] CUT TO THE BATHROOM, SLIGHTLY LARGER PANEL. **CRACKERJACK** IS ASLEEP, SNORING, IN THE WHIRLPOOL.

CRACKERJACK
Snxxxxxxxxxx --

[3] SHE'S WALKED INTO THE BEDROOM IN HER SEMI-SHEER ROBE. STANDS AT THE WINDOW, LOOKING OUT AT THE CITY. SHE'S PRETTY SEXY-LOOKING HERE, BUT HER ATTITUDE'S CASUAL, THOUGHTFUL.

CAPTION
Is this how it is now?

[4] SHE TAKES A SIP OF WINE.

[5] AND GO CLOSE ON HER REFLECTION IN THE GLASS OF THE WINDOW.

CAPTION
Is there where I was headed, all those years?

CAPTION
All that time ago...

**TWELVE - 5 PANELS**

ALL FULL TIERS.

[1] FULL TIER. ON THE **SUN** IN THE SKY, A CONTRAST FROM THE PREVIOUS SCENE.

[2] PULL BACK OR PAN DOWN. WE'RE LOOKING AT THE **HILL COUNTRY** OF EASTERN KENTUCKY, FROM A DISTANCE.

CAPTION
Not a lot of city lights, back then.

CAPTION
Not in eastern Kentucky, not in the Cumberlands. Not back then, not much more now.

[3] LARGE PANEL. HER **BACKWOODS HOME**. A TWO-STORY HOUSE, BUT THE PAINT'S ALMOST ALL PEELED OFF, THE PORCH SAGS, AND THE WHOLE THING LOOKS RICKETY. LIKE A SMALLER VERSION OF THE WALTON'S HOUSE, IF NO ONE HAD EVER TAKEN CARE OF IT. THERE ARE THREE YOUNG BOYS SITTING AROUND ON THE PORCH, LISTLESSLY.

NEXT TO THE HOUSE, WALKING PAST A NEGLECTED TIRE SWING, IS **JESSICA DARLENE TAGGART** (QUARREL), AGE ABOUT 8, IN OVERALLS WITH NO SHIRT, BAREFOOT, CARRYING A SQUIRREL GUN UNDER ONE ARM AND A HANDFUL OF DEAD SQUIRRELS BY THEIR TAILS IN THE OTHER.

CAPTION
We broiled in the summers, we froze in the winters.

CAPTION
Half the time, one of us kids shot dinner. I didn't know there was anything weird about eating squirrel, aside from that it tastes so bad.

CAPTION
But that was life.

[4] GO CLOSER ON HER **FACE**, SHOWING NO HOPE, NO LIVELINESS, NO EXPRESSION.

CAPTION
We didn't have much.

[5] SAME SHOT, SAME ANGLE. BUT NOW HER FACE LIGHTS UP. SHE'S SEEN SOMETHING IN FRONT OF HER THAT MAKES HER HUGELY HAPPY.

CAPTION
What we did have was --

**THIRTEEN - 5 PANELS**

[1] HERE COMES **MACK TAGGART**, HER FATHER (AND THE ORIGINAL QUARREL, SEEN IN 'TARNISHED ANGEL'). HE'S IN COVERALLS, CARRYING AN OLD-FASHIONED ROUND-TOPPED LUNCHBOX, AND GETTING OUT OF A WEATHERED OLD JEEP THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN PAINTED AS A MAIL TRUCK ONCE, BUT THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. HE'S SMILING.

FROM THE FOREGROUND, SHE'S RUSHING TOWARD HIM (SHE'S DUMPED THE RIFLE AND SQUIRRELS).

JESS
Dad!

JESS
(sb, bl)
DAD!

[2] SHE'S THROWN HER ARMS AROUND HIS NECK, HE'S SWINGING HER AROUND AS HE HUGS HER, HER LEGS OUT PRACTICALLY PARALLEL TO THE GROUND. HE'S A LOVING, DEMONSTRATIVE DAD.

CAPTION
Mack Taggart.

CAPTION
My hero.

TAGGART
Hey there, little brisket!

TAGGART
Feedin' the pot, huh?

NEXT, A SET OF THREE PANELS, ALL THE SAME SIZE:

[3] WE SEE HIM TEACHING A SOMEWHAT YOUNGER **JESS** TO SHOOT. SHE'S LYING ON THE GROUND WITH THE SQUIRREL GUN, AIMING AT A TREE; HE'S CROUCHED NEXT TO HER, TALKING.

CAPTION
He taught all us kids to shoot, though I was always kind of a natural at that --

TAGGART
...and squeeze, don't jerk...

[4] WE SEE HIM IN THE OPEN BARN AREA, HOLDING UP MAKESHIFT PADS ON HIS HANDS AS **JESS** LEARNS TO PUNCH AND JAB AT HIM. THE **BOYS** (ALL YOUNGER THAN HER) SIT ON HAYBALES OR SOMETHING, WATCHING, ONE OF THEM UP, FISTS RAISED AND DANCING, WAITING FOR HIS TURN.

CONTINUED:

CAPTION
-- taught us to fight --

TAGGART
...watch my shoulders and feet, that'll tell you a lot...

[5] AND IN ANOTHER AREA OF THE BARN, HE'S GOT HOME-MADE GYM EQUIPMENT SET UP -- VAULTING HORSE, GYMNASTICS BAR, RINGS AND MORE. **JESS** IS SITTING ON THE VAULTING HORSE, CLAPPING AS **MACK** DOES A MULTI-SOMERSAULT DISMOUNT FROM THE HIGH BAR.

CAPTION
-- and since I had some aptitude at it, he taught me to move, to do all he could do. Maybe that shoulda tipped me off --

CAPTION
-- but he was my dad, and everyone's dad is larger than life.

CAPTION
What they can do is just what your dad does, you know?

**FOURTEEN - 5 PANELS**

[1] FULL TIER. WE SEE **MACK** DRIVING OFF, AWAY FROM THE HOUSE IN THE JEEP, TURNING TO WAVE GOODBYE AS HE DOES.

CAPTION
He was a mailman. Big rural district. A lot of miles, every day.

CAPTION
It didn't occur to me to wonder why we had so little money, most of the time, when he had a steady job.

[2] EVENING. WE SEE **MACK** GETTING OUT OF THE JEEP AT HOME, BUT FROM THE PASSENGER SIDE. THE DRIVER, A **LANKY, LONG-FACED GUY**, IS LEANING OVER FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT AS MACK HANDS HIM A FEW BILLS.

CAPTION
I did wonder why he paid Bill Straker, or a few other guys, to take over his route from time to time.

CAPTION
He'd just laugh, and says he had business.

CAPTION
I'd ask, when I was old enough, if I could do it. He'd say that sounded just fine, and I'd glow.

[3] LOOKING PAST **JESS**, SITTING IN THE TIRE SWING, CHIN RESTING ON THE TOP OF IT, GAZING AT THE EMPTY DRIVEWAY.

CAPTION
And then he'd be gone a while.

CAPTION
He'd be gone a while a lot.

[4] FULL TIER. INSIDE THE HOUSE, AROUND THE DINNER TABLE, **FOUR KIDS** (INCLUDING **JESS**), A WORN-DOWN LOOKING **WIFE**, LADLING OUT STEW, AND **MACK**, SITTING AT THE END OF THE TABLE, TALKING ABOUT THE FUTURE, ABOUT HOW EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE GREAT. HE'S ANIMATED, TALKING WITH HIS HANDS. THE KIDS ARE RAPT, EXCITED. THE WIFE IS NOT. SHE'S HEARD IT BEFORE, SHE'S JUST LADLING OUT THE STEW, LOOKING WORN AND TIRED AND SOUR.

CAPTION
And he told us how much better it was gonna be, when his ship came in --

TAGGART
...and we'll move to Louisville. Hell, maybe Nashville. Shop in a supermarket, like on the TV, drink ice-cold Cokes every day...

[5] VERY CLOSE ON YOUNG **JESS'S FACE**. SHE BELIEVES EVERY WORD.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAPTION
It sounded so real, I could practically taste the soda pop right then. I'd have my own room, he said. A new gun.

CAPTION
A pocket radio.

CAPTION
It sounded like Heaven.

**FIFTEEN - 3 PANELS**

ALL FULL TIERS.

[1] BIG PANEL, MORE THAN HALF THE PAGE. CLOSE ON A TV SCREEN, SO CLOSE WE DON'T SEE THE EDGES. BUT IT'S AN OLD BLACK-AND-WHITE TV, WITH A FEW STATIC LINES.

WHAT WE'RE SEEING ON THE TV IS THE **TERRIFYING THREE**, CUFFED AND BEING LED AWAY (RIGHT TOWARD THE CAMERA), HEADS DOWN, ON THEIR WAY TO JAIL. **QUARREL** IS OUT FRONT, **CUTLASS** BEHIND AND BESIDE HIM, **STEELJACK** LOOMING OVER THEM BOTH (AND IN HEAVIER RESTRAINTS). **COPS** ALL AROUND.

CAPTION
Lotta stuff sounds like Heaven, I've noticed. Most of it's a lie.

CAPTION
His line of fertilizer sure was.

TV
(elec)
-- dramatic capture today by the costumed hero Jack-In-The-Box of the so-called Terrifying Three --

TV
(elec)
-- Cutlass, Quarrel and the Steel-Jacketed Man --

TV
(elec)
-- who were apprehended during an attempted robbery of the luxury riverboat resort Princess, during its opening gala --

[2] CLOSER IN ON THE TV SCREEN, ON **QUARREL'S FACE**, STILL WITH HIS HEAD DOWN. BLURRIER NOW, SINCE WE'RE ZOOMED IN CLOSER.

CAPTION
Little Mack called me in from outside to see it.

CAPTION
They showed it over and over.

[3] ON **JESS'S FACE**, LIT BY THE TV. SHE LOOKS STUNNED, DISBELIEVING. [SHE'S ALSO A YEAR OR TWO OLDER.]

TV
(elec)
The Three, who last month escaped with two million in negotiable bonds from an attack on Astro City's financial district --

CONTINUED:

CAPTION
Two million dollars. And a “luxury riverboat.”

**SIXTEEN - 5 PANELS**

[1] FULL TIER. PULL BACK. **JESS** GETS UP FROM THE FLOOR, WHERE SHE'D BEEN RIGHT IN FRONT OF AN OLD CONSOLE TV, ON A RAG RUG IN THEIR WORN FRONT ROOM. SHE'S TURNING AWAY FROM THE TV AS SHE GETS UP. THE OTHER THREE **KIDS** ARE ARRAYED AROUND THE TV, BUT THEY'RE WATCHING HER GO. THE **MOTHER** WATCHES FROM THE KITCHEN, STILL LISTLESS.

CAPTION
I hadn't been on a boat bigger than my cousin Johnny's dinghy, when we'd go out to get some fish.

KID
Jess?

KID
What do we do?

[2] FULL TIER. LONGSHOT. **BIRO ISLAND PRISON**.

CAPTION
I hitched all the way out to see him in jail, dodging cops and do-gooders.

CAPTION
Had to see him. Had to hear what he had to say.

[3] IN ONE OF THOSE ROOMS WHERE PRISONERS MEET PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE, BUT THERE'S A PLEXIGLASS DIVIDER AND A STEEL BENCH. THIS IS ABOUT 1975, SO I DON'T KNOW IF THEY'D TALK THROUGH PHONE RECEIVERS, OR JUST A GRATE IN THE PLEXIGLASS. **JESS** SITS ON HER SIDE, EYING **MACK** AS HE COMES IN.

CAPTION
They didn't believe I was who I was until they took a photo in to him and he said yeah, that's my kid.

CAPTION
Turned out I maybe didn't have to go anyway.

[4] CLOSE ON **MACK**, CLOSE TO THE PLEXIGLASS, LEANING FORWARD, SADNESS IN HIS EYES, TRYING TO APOLOGIZE, TO EXPLAIN.

CAPTION
It wasn't like he had much to say.

TAGGART
...so sorry, honey. I'm so very sorry.

TAGGART
It was all gonna be for you. For Arla and the boys. For that place in Nashville, to get you into good schools...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

[5] FULL TIER. ON **JESS** OUT BY THE HIGHWAY, HITCHING EASTWARD, HITCHING HOME.

CAPTION
Or maybe it's good I went.

CAPTION
Saved me making stuff up. Coming up with excuses.

**SEVENTEEN - 5 PANELS**

[1] **JESS** IS HUDDLED IN THE BACK OF A PICKUP TRUCK AS IT ZOOMS DOWN THE HIGHWAY, HEADED EAST, THOUGH IOWA, OR SOMEWHERE.

CAPTION
Two million dollars. And more, before that.

CAPTION
Sure, he said he had backers to pay, and equipment costs, and blah blah blah. But still.

[2] **JESS** TRUDGES UP A DIRT ROAD, UP A MOUNTAIN, HEADING HOME. HER BELONGINGS IN A GUNNY SACK SLUNG OVER HER SHOULDER.

CAPTION
There wasn't going to be any Nashville. Or Louisville. If that's what he was after, he'd have brought the money home. At least once.

CAPTION
I was going to have to step up, I knew. Ma was never much. If there was going to be food on the table, doctor visits and stuff --

[3] **JESS** WALKS INTO THE HOUSE. SHE'S NOT HAPPY. HER THREE **BROTHERS** ARE EXCITED TO SEE HER, FULL OF QUESTIONS.

CAPTION
-- it was gonna have to be me.

KID
Jessie!

OTHER KID
Didja see him? Is he okay?

THIRD KID
What happened? What --

JESS
Nothing.

[4] CLOSE ON HER **FACE**, ANGRY, SEETHING WITH SUPPRESSED FURY -- SHE'S 12 YEARS OLD AND SHE'S THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY, LIKE IT OR NOT -- AS SHE HEADS UPSTAIRS. PAST HER, THEY CALL AFTER HER.

THIRD KID
But Jess --

JESS
(bl)
NOTHING!

CONTINUED:

[5] FULL TIER. AT SCHOOL, OUT ON THE CRACKED, DILAPIDATED PLAYGROUND, **JESS** FIGHTS A **LARGER BOY**. SHE'S WINNING. **OTHER KIDS** CROWD AROUND, WATCHING, CHEERING.

CAPTION
The kids at school weren't exactly comforts in our time of stress, either.

CAPTION
I had to loosen a few teeth before they'd quit squawking about it like a bunch of crows.

**EIGHTEEN - 5 PANELS**

[1] THREE YEARS LATER. HER **FATHER** STANDS IN THE DOORWAY OF THE HOUSE, A DUFFLE BAG HANGING FROM HIS HAND, A TAXI SEEN LEAVING PAST HIM.

CAPTION
He came back. More than once.

CAPTION
He got out. He broke out, a few times. He always went back in.

CAPTION
But it was his house. That's what it said on the papers.

[2] **MACK** WALKS IN TO THE LIVING ROOM. **JESS**, NOW 15, IS LYING ON HER BACK ON THE COUCH, IN JEANS AND A FLANNEL SHIRT, READING A SCHOOLBOOK. THE OTHER **THREE KIDS** ARE THERE, BUT THEY'RE ALL LOOKING AT JESS, TO TELL THEM HOW TO REACT.

TAGGART
Jessie...

JESS
Studying.

JESS
L.M., you and Toby get dinner started. Ma's got one of her headaches again. Paulie, you pick some extra greens.

[3] CLOSER ON **JESS**, INTENTLY READING HER BOOK. WE SEE **MACK'S LEGS AND TORSO** (HE'S PRETTY SHORT) BUT NOT HIS HEAD. HE'S CLOSE TO HER, ASKING FOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT. FORGIVENESS, ANGER, SOMETHING. SO BASICALLY, HE'S STANDING AND LOOKING AT HER, AND SHE WON'T LOOK AT HIM.

TAGGART
Jess.

JESS
Studying.

[4] IN THE BARN, WE SEE HER IN TRAINING GLOVES, HITTING A SPEED BAG. THERE'S A HEAVY BAG HANGING NEARBY.

CAPTION
I still trained, though.

CAPTION
It was good to hit things.

CONTINUED:

[5] IN THE GYM AREA OF THE BARN, SHE'S VAULTING FROM THE PARALLEL BARS TO THE RINGS, IN A PRETTY COOL SPINNING VAULT.

CAPTION
It was good to move.

**NINETEEN - 5 PANELS**

[1] FULL TIER. SHE LIFTS UP A BOARD IN THE BARN FLOOR. THERE'S HIS EQUIPMENT. HIS COSTUME, HIS GEAR.

CAPTION
It wasn't enough, though.

CAPTION
And then, one day he was down to town, looking for work -- if drinking longnecks at Patsies counts as job-hunting --

THREE VERTICALS:

[2] SHE TAKES IT OUT, GENTLY, CAREFULLY, AS IF IT'S A RARE TREASURE. HER FACE, WHICH HAS BEEN CLOSED-OFF MOST OF THE TIME WE'VE SEEN HER, IS GENTLER NOW, SHOWING CURIOSITY AND MAYBE A LITTLE WONDER.

[3] HOLDING THE ARM-MOUNTED LAUNCHER, SHE LOOKS AT IT, TURNING IT THIS WAY AND THAT, SEEING IF SHE CAN FIGURE OUT HOW IT WORKS. A THING, FINGERLESS GLOVE DANGLES FROM ONE END, WITH A VISIBLE TRIGGERING CIRCUIT OF SOME SORT.

[4] SHE SLIDES HER ARM INTO IT, CAREFULLY. IT'S BUILT FOR A THICKER ARM THAN HERS, SO IT'S WAY TOO BIG, BUT SHE'S JUST TRYING IT.

[5] FULL TIER. SHE'S OUTSIDE, SHOOTING QUARREL-CHARGES AT TREES, SWEEPING HER ARM ACROSS AND HITTING EACH ONE DEAD CENTER. SHE'S HOLDING THE BACK OF THE LAUNCHER WITH THE OTHER ARM, TO KEEP IT STEADY, BECAUSE IT DOESN'T FIT.

FX
POOM POOM POOM

CAPTION
It was -- it was --

**TWENTY - 5 PANELS**

[1] FULL TIER. CLOSE ON HER FACE AS SHE'S JOLTED, STARTLED, BY A VOICE FROM CLOSE BEHIND HER.

FROM OFF
I wouldn't.

[2] **JESS** TURNS, WARY. HER **DAD'S** STANDING THERE, WITH A BEER IN HIS HAND. SOMBER.

TAGGART
You ain't gonna listen to me. You don't even want to see me. And I don't blame you.

TAGGART
I let you down. All of you.

[3] HE EXPLAINS, MORE.

TAGGART
But it ain't no life. Not for you. Not for me, if I'm honest with myself. But I dream too easy. And I dream too big.

TAGGART
I wanted you to have the best, little brisket.

[4] **JESS** STANDS THERE A MOMENT, LOOKING AT HIM, ALMOST LIKE HE'S SLAPPED HER, OR IS ABOUT TO (NOT HIS ATTITUDE; HE'S SORROWFUL. HER ATTITUDE).

[5] FULL TIER. **JESS** STOMPS OFF TOWARD US, FURIOUS. HIS EQUIPMENT LIES ON THE GROUND AT HIS FEET. HE WATCHES HER GO. BUT MOSTLY, WE'RE ON HER FURIOUS FACE, COMING TOWARD US. SHE HAS NO OUTLET FOR HER ANGER. NOTHING BUT RESPONSIBILITY.

CAPTION
It felt good to hit things. To move. To do something hard and be good at it.

CAPTION
But be like him? I had responsibilities. I had the boys. I couldn't --

CAPTION
I couldn't just --

**TWENTY-ONE - 5 PANELS**

[1] FULL TIER. NIGHTTIME. SHE SITS ON THE ROOF ON HER HOUSE, LOOKING OUT AT NOTHING. WE SEE HER FROM THE SIDE, OR BEHIND. PULLED BACK, SO WE SEE THE WHOLE ROOFLINE.

CAPTION
I didn't know what to do. Didn't even know what I could do.

CAPTION
I felt like I was going to burst --

CAPTION
Like I wanted to kill him, or blow something up --

CAPTION
He went away again. Caught by the original Hummingbird. His friends must have given him hell for that, in stir.

[2] WE SEE HER FIRING THE ARM-LAUNCHER AGAIN, PUTTING MULTIPLE BURSTS INTO THE SAME TREE. SHE'S 17 NOW.

CAPTION
But by then, I'd found his backup equipment stash --

FX
POOM POOM POOM POOM POOM

[3] LATER, WE SEE HER HOLDING HER ARM UP AS SHE STRAPS THE LAUNCHER ON. IT FITS NOW; SHE'S MODIFIED IT.

CAPTION
I'd figured out how to modify it --

[4] SHE'S IN MID-AIR ABOVE A SMALL MOUNTAIN LAKE, IN SHORTS, A STRAPPY T-SHIRT, AND THE LAUNCHER. SHE'S FLAILIING AROUND, HAVING LET GO THE LINE SHE SWUNG OUT THIS FAR ON, AND IS NOW FIRING ANOTHER LINE AT THE TREES ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE.

CAPTION
Learned to do new things --

JESS
(ragged)
Whoaaaaaaaaaaaa -- !

[5] CLOSE ON HER. LYING ON HER BED, HANDS BEHIND HER HEAD. EYES OPEN, STARING AT NOTHING. FACE DETERMINED.

CAPTION
I didn't know why.

CONTINUED:

CAPTION
I just knew I had to.

CAPTION
Had to or I’d explode from not being able to.

**TWENTY-TWO - 5 PANELS**

FIRST, FOUR TIGHT, QUICK, SMALLISH PANELS.

[1] ON A RADIO, BY HER BED.

CAPTION
And then --

RADIO
(elec)
...armed robbers in a police standoff at the Martin County Regional School Spring Dance...

[2] CLOSE ON PART OF HER, SHUCKING ON A LEATHER JACKET.

[3] CLOSE ON PART OF HER, FASTENING ON THE LAUNCHER.

[4] CLOSE ON PART OF HER, AS SHE TIES ON THE MASK.

[5] AND THEN A BIG PANEL, AS SHE ROARS OUT OF THE BARN IN HER HALF-ASSED COSTUME (JEANS, BOOTS, THE JACKET, A BLACK T-SHIRT, THE LAUNCHER, GLOVES, THE MASK) ON A MOTORCYCLE, DOING JUST ENOUGH OF A TURN AS SHE BARRELS FORWARD SO WE SEE HER CLEARLY, A LOW SHOT SO SHE LOOKS EXTRA DRAMATIC, DETERMINED AND HEROIC.

CAPTION
I hadn't even thought.

CAPTION
But I had Junior Wilkerson's old biker jacket. Dad's stuff.

CAPTION
Mike Trapper's bike that he'd never miss since he was an M.P. In Germany --

**TWENTY-THREE - 3 PANELS, SORT OF**

[1] TAKING UP THE TOP HALF OF THE PAGE OR SO, A GHOSTLY IMAGE OF **QUARREL** IN ACTION IN HER FIRST MISSION, SWINGING ON A ROPE, FIRING BOLTS FROM THE LAUNCHER TOWARD STARTLED ARMED ROBBERS IN THE FOREGROUND...

[2] ...BUT THAT GHOSTLY IMAGE IS JUST A MEMORY, AND FADES INTO A SHOT OF **QUARREL** AT THE WINDOW, LOOKING OUT AT THE NIGHT, HOLDING HER WINEGLASS.

CAPTION
That was how it started.

CAPTION
And I found myself thinking, and not for the first time:

[3] CLOSE ON HER, THOUGHTFUL.

CAPTION
How's it going to end?

**TWENTY-FOUR - 5 PANELS**

[1] FULL TIER. ON HER HEAD FROM THE SIDE. A VOICE COMES FROM BEHIND HER.

FROM OFF
You know, there used to be flying dogs in this town. Cats, too.

[2] SHE TURNS TO LOOK AT **CRACKERJACK**, WHO HAS A TOWEL WRAPPED AROUND HIS WAIST. HE'S LOOKING ROGUISH.

QUARREL
Oh, come on. They were before your time.

CRACKERJACK
Hey, not all of them.  Who was that, that blue missile guy, out of the Dakotas? When he quit, his dog --

QUARREL
Rocket Dog.

CRACKERJACK
Yeah, he hung around the city, joined in when he could find a fight.

[3] CLOSER ON THEM. HE TAKES HER IN HIS ARMS. SHE'S BEING A BIT SARCASTIC, THOUGH.

QUARREL
And you...didn't make jokes about pooper-scooper laws?

CRACKERJACK
I'm just saying. Town's changed.

CRACKERJACK
Hey, we could...

QUARREL
Go to bed, Jack. You're dead on your feet.

[4] SHE LOOKS BACK OUT THE WINDOW. IN THE BACKGROUND, HE LEAVES, CALLING TO HER AS HE GOES.

CRACKERJACK
You've changed, too!

CAPTION
Yes. I have changed. I used to think about the future all the time.

[5] PULL BACK ON HER, ALONE AT HER BIG FLOOR TO CEILING WINDOW IN THE NIGHT.

CONTINUED:

CAPTION
I was so hungry for it. I'd fight anything, anyone, to get there. To get anywhere. And now?

CAPTION
Now I look back a lot. And when I do think about the future, I wonder:

CAPTION
How's it all going to end?

BLURB
To Be Continued